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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

SSS: AG Moody Kicks Off Summer Scams Series with Warning About Vacation Rental Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today launched the Summer Scams Series. The series, focusing on consumer protection, outlines common scams seen during the summer months. Attorney General Moody is kicking off the series with a Consumer Alert about vacation rental scams.

These scams involve fake postings offering vacation rental properties. The scammers behind these ads often request an application fee or security deposit. Once payment is made, the rental listing may disappear along with the consumer's money. Families may also show up on the day of vacation and find that the actual owners of the property have no record or intention of renting. Attorney General Moody wants to protect vacationing Floridians and the millions of tourists who travel to Florida each year from falling for this scheme.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Florida is one of the most popular vacation destinations in the nation. Scammers will take advantage of this by creating fake vacation rental listings in hopes of stealing personal information and money. Whether you are traveling within the state or from out of state, make sure to take extra precautions when renting a vacation home to avoid being burned this summer vacation season."

Tips to avoid vacation rental scams:

- Know that listings requiring consumers to leave the online platform or website to pay is a major red flag;
- Check to see if photos of the rental property are affiliated with other listings by using a reverse image search;
- If something seems suspicious, ask for additional photos of the listing;
- Use a reputable rental website that offers protection in the event of fraud or offers payment transfer options;
- Make payments through a payment portal on the listing website to ensure money is held in escrow until keys are in hand;
- Do not rely solely on email to contact the landlord and be wary of listings with foreign telephone numbers;
- Check for reviews and, if possible, visit the property to ensure everything is up to par; and
- Pay for a rental with a credit card since it is easier to dispute a fraudulent charge.

Anyone who encounters a vacation rental scam should immediately report it to local law enforcement and file a complaint online with the Florida Attorney General's Office at MyFloridaLegal.com or call 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.